

BLUE HERON MEDICINE LODGE

By Vivian Panther Lawson

At the March meeting, citing health reasons, Night Eagle Curtis resigned all positions he held, including Ceremonial Leader. As of this writing, we have been unable to replace him.

Lee Spotted Pony Billingsley graciously provided leadership for two of the ceremonies scheduled for 2007. Wado Lee! And although we met on the grounds, the remaining ceremonies we had no leadership for.

In March the Blue Heron Medicine Lodge was incorporated under the auspices of the Southeastern Cherokee Council as a non-profit organization for tax purposes.

The ceremonial schedule for 2008 is featured in this issue. I am asking the Band Chiefs for help in providing leadership for these ceremonies on the National Tribal Grounds. If your Ceremonial Leader can provide this service for us on one of the dates on the ceremonial calendar, please check the schedule and let me know which ceremony they can lead. I would be most grateful.

Wado and respectfully,

Panther # # #

INDIANS STILL EXIST

Two Eagles, of the Buffalo Creek Band, proposed to prove to a third grade class at the Dutch Valley Elementary school that Indians still exist!

Two Eagles, who is the band historian, and great great grandson of people who walked the Trail of Tears, was approached by the teacher of the class after hearing one of her male students state to the rest of the class that Indians are a thing of the past and no longer exist. This created some active discussion!



Two Eagles of Buffalo Creek Band

So December 14, 2007, Two Eagles, dressed in regalia, appeared before the class to dispel the myth that Indians are extinct. He demonstrated that Native Americans do indeed thrive in today's modern society. He presented insights as to how it is possible to live in the present and yet hold on to and preserve the rich Native American culture of the past.

One story that Two Eagles related to the class was a true life experience he had while working with a client in a hospital in the evenings. This client, or "patient" was considered to be at times out of touch with reality by others of the health care people caring for her. Ah, but that is another story, to be told in greater detail later!

After two Eagle's presentation to the class, the students were much more informed about the true state of Native Americans and their role in modern society.

A LOT OF NOISE AT STATE PARK

Just as darkness fell upon Norris Dam State Park in Tennessee, the sound of loud drumming and Native American chanting began to be heard. Visitors who had arrived for the Heritage Day events looked over toward where all the noise emanated and beheld a cabin with a camp fire burning strong and shadowy figures around the fire apparently dressed in a non-customary way.

Many of the visitors were drawn to this activity and followed trails lit on both sides by paper bag luminaries with flickering candles inside. Upon their arrival, perhaps to alleviate any fears they might have, they were warmly greeted by members of the Buffalo Creek Band.

Spontaneously, dancing began around the fire in a counter clockwise direction led by none other than Chief Thunderfoot herself! Teaching as she led, Thunderfoot proceeded around the fire and at times departed the fire to form the Snake Dance, making twists and turns to simulate the movements of a serpent. Several children and adults participated and by their smiles and relaxed demeanor, it was evident that a good time was being had by all.

Inside the nearby cabin the visitors beheld displays of artifacts, historical accounts and crafts being done before their very eyes. Native American culture, with emphasis on Cherokee history, was explained to many visitors by the different members of the Band.

This was the second year in a row in which this event has been a popular success for the Buffalo Creek Band and many favorable comments were heard afterward from State Park Personnel and visitors alike. This has proven to be an excellent way for members of the Southeastern Cherokee Council to make an impact and an educational and entertaining event for the people in the East Tennessee area.

One of the Band members demonstrating the crafts and participating in the Native music was Cosette Windfeather Faulkner, pictured below, holding a hand made wall hanging depicting the seven clans of the Cherokee people.



Cosette Wind Feather of the Buffalo Creek Band

The Heritage Day event is an annual event to portray several aspects of life of the early settlers and native inhabitants of the area around the Norris Dam. The December event draws a large number of people from all around the area and it looks like the Buffalo Creek Band has established a tradition of making all aware of the people who were already here when the settlers arrived...and that their descendants are still here preserving the old ways and culture.